

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Amend the second full paragraph on page 3 as follows:

In the context of the present invention, the term "diagnostic beads" refer to small granule-like particles, having a diameter of 2-5mm, that are either coated or impregnated with a detection composition for detecting blood in cat excreta. "'Particulate material" refers to the particles or granules from which the diagnostic beads are produced, which may include wood-based beads, coated wood-based beads, "eco-granules" (a wooden based-product currently used in some cat litters, produced by Cycle Group Inc.), silica gel particles, clay beads, or any other suitable organic or inorganic particle. A method for the preparation of wood-based beads for use as a particulate material in the present invention is disclosed in U.S. patent 6030565, entitled, "Method for Manufacturing an Agglomerate" and in U.S. patent 6572920 B1 ~~application 09/497337~~, entitled, "Method of Coating Granulated Material".

Amend the sixth full paragraph on page 6 as follows:

Additionally according to preferred embodiments of the present invention, the step of applying the detection composition comprises dissolving the detection composition in a suitable solvent such as

alcohol (ethanol or methanol) combined with sodium hydroxide solution and spraying the resultant solution onto the particulate material. Another way to apply the detection composition is to mix all the detection composition components in dry powder, and coat the particulate material with the dry powder using an appropriate method, such as that described in U.S. patent 6572920 B1 ~~application 09/497337~~, entitled, "Method of Coating Granulated Material."

Amend the last paragraph on page 7 as follows:

In preferred embodiments of the present invention, the following detection composition is used, for coating or impregnation into particulate material, for the production of the diagnostic beads of the present invention. Unless it is otherwise indicated, the beads used in the examples were wood-based beads (preferably said beads are made according to the method disclosed in U.S. patent 6572920 B1 ~~application 09/497337~~).